



INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY

Call for Papers:

## Critical Theory in an Age of Social Disintegration

Institute for Critical Social Theory

[criticalsocialtheory.com](http://criticalsocialtheory.com)

Inaugural Conference

Bristol University, UK

July 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The Institute for Critical Social Theory would like to invite you to our first international conference: **Critical Theory in an Age of Social Disintegration**, which will take place at the University of Bristol, UK, on July 17-19, 2025. We have an exciting lineup of plenary speakers (see below), and we look forward to seeing you. Please help us spread the word about our event.

The world is in a tumultuous state. Having just come out of a global COVID-19 pandemic, the world is now witnessing the largest war in Europe since World War II, with tensions between NATO and the Russian Federation at its highest since the Cold War; the International Court of Justice has assessed that state-directed genocide is likely occurring in Gaza, which massacres being broadcast through social media; the threat of a broader war within the Middle East looms, as Israel targets Hezbollah and Hamas, and Iran responds with volleys of rockets; Strongmen are on the rise, while far-right populism continues to challenge multicultural democracies in the U.S., Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, etc., with their anti-immigrant platforms; The demand for a “multipolar” world continues to challenge the unipolar “rules based order” that was established after the horrors of World War II; Various forms of nationalism, both secular and religious, continue to undermine secular modernity and its multicultural demography; Trump’s ultra-nationalist MAGA movement, crystalized in Ronald Reagan’s palingenetic phrase, “Make America Great Again,” continues to undermine the democratic nature of the world’s last super power. Despite the promises of international connectivity, universal prosperity, and increased democratic control of power, we are living in a time of instability, hostility, and the ever-looming threat of environmental disaster. As Herbert Marcuse wrote already in 1973: the “world is terrible and is becoming ever more terrible, beyond our capacity to imagine.” However, now is not the time to retreat into nihilism or despair, but rather to analyze, critique, and engage in a future-oriented praxis with the practical intent to abate, arrest, and determinately negate the “terrible.”

Just like world-historical moments before, the present time calls for robust critical analyses of global problems. Additionally, the complex nature of the world's problems necessitates an inter-disciplinary approach toward its analysis. Along with the rest of the world, Critical Theory (broadly construed), has begun to shed its Eurocentrism as it continues to globalize. It no longer only speaks within a Western idiom, but has also learn to commune with the philosophers, sociologists, psychoanalysts, historians, artists, and other scholars from outside of the West, who have an equal concern for the future of the world. Therefore, the Institute for Critical Social Theory invites those scholars who are working on globalized problems from a variety of disciplinary approaches, intellectual traditions, and geographical locations, who engage with these questions and beyond. Possible topics include – but are not limited to – the following:

- Nationalism, far-right populism, authoritarianism
- Race, ethnicity, gender, and religious identity in modernity
- Globalization and its discontents
- Decolonial critiques in the study of religion, philosophy, political economy, etc.
- Antagonisms between religious voices and secular democracy
- Multipolarity and its challenge to Unipolarity.
- Inter- and Intra-antagonisms within nation-states, civilizations, and religions
- Theory and method within globalized critical social theory
- War in Europe and the Middle East
- Critique of Ideology
- Colonialism, decolonization, and post-colonialism theory

The conference will primarily be “in-person.” However, for special cases, some *members* of the ICST may join via Zoom.

## Plenary Speakers:



Dustin J. Byrd, Ph.D.  
Professor of Philosophy and Religion  
The University of Olivet, USA



Seyed Javad Miri, Ph.D.  
Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies  
Tehran, Iran

### **The Institute for Critical Social Theory:**

The Institute for Critical Social Theory (ICST) was founded in 2021 by Dustin J. Byrd (The University of Olivet, USA) and Seyed Javad Miri (Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Iran) as an international consortium of scholars working within the realm of social-political and cultural theory. Interdisciplinary in its outlook, ICST seeks to create opportunities for scholars throughout the world to collaborate on projects, share their publications, discuss their ideas, and network on common interests. The Institute for Critical Social Theory is especially interested in collaborative work that critically focuses on social, economic, and political change as it relates to both the global North in relation to the global South. ICST's inaugural issue of its journal, *Critical Perspectives*, will launch in 2025. Please consider contributing to the journal.

For more information, visit our website at: [criticalsocialtheory.com](http://criticalsocialtheory.com)

Abstracts of individual papers and panels of 300-350 should be submitted to [instituteofcriticalsocialtheory@gmail.com](mailto:instituteofcriticalsocialtheory@gmail.com) Please include "Bristol Conference" in your subject line.

### **Deadlines:**

**February 15, 2025:** Deadline to submit abstract.

**March 10, 2025:** Notification of acceptance.

### **Schedule for the Conference:**

Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup>: Paper presentations at BU's Moot Court.

- Evening dinner in Bristol (optional).

Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup>: Paper presentations at BU's Moot Court.

- Evening dinner in Bristol (optional).

Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>: Guided walking tour through of the city of Bristol (optional), wherein we will visit numerous historical sites in the city.

### **Registration:**

£200 for Tenured/Tenure-track Professors

£100 for Graduate and Undergraduate Students

Registration fees can be paid at the venue.

**Location:**

The conference will take place in-person at the University of Bristol Law School. The building is the Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol. BS8 1RJ.



## Travel and accommodation:

### Travel options:

- The nearest train station is **Bristol Temple Meads**. The nearest airport is Bristol Airport. Regular buses run from Bristol airport to the city of Bristol.
- For some international travel, you may wish to take the EuroStar if travelling from Europe. There are good train connections from London to Bristol also.
- If flying, you may need to fly into London Heathrow airport. Using the [Heathrow Express](#), you can travel directly to London Paddington, from where there are regular trains to and from Bristol Temple Meads.
- Information on train times is available on the [National Rail website](#).

### Hotels:

Attendees are responsible for booking their own hotel. The nearest hotels to the conference venue include:

- [Berkeley Square Hotel](#)
- [Victoria Square Hotel](#)
- [Hotel du Vin Bristol City Centre](#)
- [Premier Inn Lewins Mead](#)
- [Premier Inn Haymarket](#)

More extensive hotel guide at: [Hotels in Bristol](#)

## The City of Bristol:

**Bristol and the Transatlantic Slave Trade:** [The University and Slavery](#)

**Five things Bristol is famous for:** [Famous Bristol](#)

### Other interesting facts about Bristol:

- Bristol was voted #1 in the [best places to visit in the UK in 2024](#) by Time Out
- Bristol was voted Best City to Live in Britain in the Sunday Times Best Places to Live Guide.
- Bristol has ranked as the Happiest City in the UK, and one of the Happiest In The World by The Institute For Quality Of Life 'Happy City Index' for 2024.
- Bristol was crowned the [Best Culinary Destination](#) in the World Food Travel Association: Food Trekking Awards.
- Bristol was named as one of the [10 happiest cities to work in the UK by The Guardian](#).
- Bristol has a [Michelin-starred](#) restaurant: Bulrush.
- Bristol was named as [The Best Place to Live Outside of London for Under 25s](#)
- Bristol was the first UK city to be awarded [European Green Capital in 2015](#).
- Bristol has been ranked as the [UK's greenest city](#) by Compare The Market
- Bristol was named [World Vegan Capital](#) by foodie website Chef's Pencil.
- According to a study by charity 52 Lives, [Bristol is the kindest city in the UK](#).
- Bristol was named [most artistic city in the UK](#) by a survey from Premier Inn, considering the number of museums, theatres, amount of live music gigs and the quantity of street art.
- Bristol is a [UNESCO City of Film](#).
- Bristol was named the [UK's first cycling city](#).
- Bristol is a [Fairtrade city](#), which sees us trading fairly with nearly five million workers in 58 developing countries

- Bristol was named [UK's most environmentally friendly city](#).
- Bristol was named as one of [The Best European Cities to visit in 2019](#) by The Independent.
- Bristol was named in the Guardian ['Where to go on holiday in 2019 – the hotlist'](#)
- Bristol named 'Rising Star' destination at [National Geographic Traveller Reader Awards](#)

Further fascinating facts about Bristol at: [Visit Bristol](#)



INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY



**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY